

Town of Agawam
Housing Committee
Minutes
August 28, 2018

Members Present: Joe Mineo, Paul Jenney, Gail Mathes, Mildred Parzychowski, Vincenzo Ronghi, Corinne Wingard, Mark Paleologopoulos

Others Present: Will Clark, Ann Lantini, Domus, Westfield.

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Mineo.

Motion to take agenda out of order – suspend rules.

Motion by Member Ronghi, second by Member Wingard, all in favor.

Member Parzychowski invited Ann Lantini, of non-profit Domus Westfield to share information about program with committee. Domus started in 1987. Revitalized Westfield, now over 7% on Subsidized Housing Inventory. In 1986, used to do group homes and lease out to State Departments of Mental Health and Retardation. Kept progressing into other things until 1988 when started small programs. Started with Reed House, for homeless mentally ill. Need to have a development consultant to work with when apply for money. Have worked with MBL Housing Development, now in Amherst – very good. Working now on old school building. Will be twenty-three apartments, low to moderate. Will cost \$8.5 million – construction, architect, services – why need development consultant. Community invited to participate – don't want NIMBYism (Not In My Backyard) Five of her properties pay taxes. Outside investors over ten year period get dollar for dollar back. Home Funds/CPA funds through City of Westfield. Prefers Westfield Housing Authority do subsidies. Also Wayfinders. Ann looks for buildings to develop.

Members discussed possible sites in Agawam. Member Parzychowski brought up school building re-purposing as town looks at school buildings. Member Ronghi stated if town decides to get into the development business, Housing Trust or Redevelopment Authority.

Ann only works in Westfield. RFP for Mosley School, low income tax credit and historic tax credit. Mass Housing Investment Corporation putting in equity – Housing Development out of Boston. Henry Joseph & Associates has sheet of what need to do for housing development. Ann wants to do building in Westfield Community Center, with housing above.

Member Parzychowski thanked Ann Lantini for coming, as give perspective on what can happen.

Motion by Member Paleologopoulos, Second by Members Wingard and Jenney to return to order of Agenda. All in favor.

1. Approval of Minutes of July 24, 2018:

Motion by Member Ronghi to approve Minutes, second by Member Paleologopoulos. Members Mineo and Paleologopoulos abstain. All other members in favor.

2. Zoning – Vote re: requesting CPA funds for Consultant for Zoning related to Housing.

Member Ronghi suggested committee could request CPA funds, then turn money over to Planning to get ordinance done. Ordinances exist state wide – bring in and cherry pick – initiate application process, then Planning fill out application. Need to get through Council. Member Ronghi stated folks in town are engaging Councilors 1:1 – acknowledge need some tools. On Council radar.

Member Paleologopoulos suggested talk with Planning Director Strange. Asked which ordinances, e.g. accessory apartments, infill housing, inclusionary zoning, cluster, height bonus, density, aging in place.

Member Ronghi suggested use Community Compact with state.

Member Wingard stated goal is to create Ordinances re: housing to give town tools to move forward in most expeditious way possible. Suggested move forward, hire consultant, and get it done. Under announcements at last meeting Planning Director Strange stated cost was about \$15,000. and best to go ahead, in response to Member Wingard 's suggestion of possibility of getting assistance from Mass Housing Partnership.

Member Paleologopoulos agreed to touch base with Planning Director Strange and bring back to committee with request. Go to Planning Board. Member Ronghi suggested co-sponsor Member Paleologopoulos will report in email to committee. No response to be given by any committee member to email, to not violate Open Meeting Law, and discuss in next meeting.

3. Housing Committee Letter to ZBA re: 596 Mill St.:

Member Jenney volunteered to draft general letter of support, send to Planning Director Strange for review, and bring to next meeting. Motion by Member Parzychowski to do so, Second by Member Ronghi, all in favor.

4. Community Engagement:

Member Wingard contacted Laura Shufelt of MHP who recommended town apply for CHAPA Municipal Engagement Initiative, and if grant not received, MHP will help

with Community Engagement. Application submitted to CHAPA by Planning Director Strange. Laura Shufelt will come to next Housing Committee meeting.

5. Housing Coordinator Subcommittee report:

Member Parzychowski reported had reviewed information with Member Wingard to merge together and figure out exactly what want. Asked what committee expected Housing Coordinator to perform. Member Ronghi stated purpose of sub-committee to go through and come up with a draft – say what thought process behind and come up with final recommendation. Member Parzychowski stated would have something ready for next month.

Member Ronghi stated go to Planning Director Strange, go to Legal, go to CPA to fund position. Planning Director Strange bring to Mayor and City Solicitor. Human Resources Department may say no.

Member Parzychowski stated position would be independent contractor, overseen by town. Define scope of work. This would be temporary, two years. City may want to buy in.

Member Jenney suggested hire Redevelopment Authority Director.

Discussion of Housing Trust/Redevelopment Authority before Housing Coordinator.

Work collaboratively with Mayor, adjust priorities.

6. Committee Priorities:

- Support Planning Department to create new Ordinances re: Housing.
- Work with current landlords to be Subsidized Housing Inventory Qualified.
- Propose Housing Trust and/or Redevelopment Authority
- ID existing buildings that could convert to affordable housing.
- Plan and sponsor Housing related seminars.
- ID developers who want to work in Agawam.
- ID parcels of land to use for multi-purpose.
- Community Engagement.

Members Ronghi and Jenney met with Planning Director Strange to start to explore options and opportunities for current landlords. Member Parzychowski stated biggest obstacle tracking. Member Jenney stated important to market affordable and not displace people. Member Mathes asked what in it for landlord.

Member Wingard stressed importance of counting on SHI which is not easy to do. Laura Shufelt of MHP who has experience in area can talk about at next meeting.

Members discussed identifying buildings that could convert, similar to Domus, and ID parcels of land to use for multi-purpose. Planning Department has inventory of properties. Member Parzychowski noted prime land – developers looking to make money. Member Ronghi suggested once town has zoning written for infill lots, could package with RFP for developer. Member Wingard noted need to be deed restricted. Member Parzychowski brought up down payment assistance for first time homebuyers. Member Ronghi stated consider average revenue CPA for housing and that small town lottery problematic. Member Parzychowski suggested community presentation re: housing purchase training, with info on first time purchases, refinancing, etc. Create template. Could use local realtors, lenders, attorneys. Noted Cambridge Credit help fix debt so move on to be home buyers. Members Parzychowski and Ronghi will work on this.

Member Wingard brought up possibility of talking with Habitat for Humanity about doing rehabilitation of buildings, which they have done. Also for tax title properties possibility of talking with administration about source for affordable housing, rather than auction off. Discussion that may not have conduit in place to do that.

7. Announcements:

Member Wingard upcoming conferences, YIMBY and MADC.

8. Suggestions for next Agenda:

1. Mass Housing Partnership Presentation.
2. Zoning.
3. Letter re: 586 Mill St.
4. Discuss Draft Housing Coordinator – review individually before.

9. Any other business that may legally come before Committee.

None.

Motion to Adjourn at 7:42 p.m. by Member Wingard, second by Member Jenney. All in favor.